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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Sixty-first session

Summary record of the 1309th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 8 July 2015, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Hayashi

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Spain (CEDAW/C/ESP/7-8; CEDAW/C/ESP/Q/7-8 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Spain took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Menéndez** (Spain), reviewing developments in Spain since July 2009, when it had submitted its sixth periodic report, said that as Spain emerged from the recent economic crisis, it was able to commit fully to ensuring equality of opportunity for men and women. For example, the 2015 budget of the Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities was nearly 8 per cent higher than the previous year's budget. The National Plan of Action for Social Inclusion 2013–2016, which had been developed in consideration of the disadvantaged situation of many women, provided for measures targeting women who were subjected to multiple forms of discrimination. Programmes targeting migrant and Roma women had been strengthened. The primary objectives of the recently adopted Strategic Plan on Equal Opportunities 2014–2016 were to reduce inequality in the areas of employment and the economy, promote shared responsibility in personal, family and work-related life and eradicate gender-based violence.

3. As part of its institutional reconfiguration, the Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities was the body responsible for championing the participation of women in all facets of Spanish social life. The reconfiguration enabled the institute to pursue its objectives in a more harmonized fashion and to take a holistic approach to addressing such phenomena as multidimensional discrimination. In a first for the institute, it had recently joined a consumers' association as a party to a suit against Ryanair for sexist advertising.

4. Noteworthy developments in the area of employment and social security included the enactment of a law revising part-time workers' means of access to social security benefits and the recent publication of the European Institute for Gender Equality's Gender Equality Index 2015, on which the country's index of 53.6 placed it just above the European Union average. In matters related to work and employment, however, Spain was below the average, and for that reason it intended to adopt a special plan to promote equality between men and women in employment-related areas.

5. The Government was also committed to combating stereotypes, particularly in the media and in schools. The Official Institute of Radio and Television had cooperated with the Institute of Women's virtual school to provide training on equality to radio and television personnel. Brief reports on equality issues were broadcast weekly on national radio. Other recent developments included the adoption in February 2015 of a code of good governance, which called on publicly listed companies to ensure that women accounted for at least 30 per cent of all their board members by 2020, and the formulation of a plan to promote the advancement of women in rural areas.

6. Fewer women had been killed by their partners or former partners in 2012, 2013 and 2014 than in any other year since 2003, when records on gender-based violence had begun. Figures from March 2014 showed that the number of complaints of gender-based violence had risen for the first time since 2008, and a related hotline, which offered legal advice, had received considerably more calls in 2014 than in 2013. Collecting data was a priority for the Government. The most recent survey on violence against women had been taken in March 2015 and had included a set of questions on

the prevalence of physical and sexual violence inflicted on women by persons other than their partners. A recent poll had shown that Spanish society considered gender violence unacceptable; nearly 90 per cent of respondents had reported that they knew where to submit a complaint for abuse.

7. Appropriations to the Government Office on Gender-based Violence had increased by 7 per cent in 2015. The State had been allocating approximately €320 million a year to combating gender-based violence. Improvements to the National Strategy for the Eradication of Violence against Women (2013–2016) included the recent adoption of a protocol on referring women victims of gender-based violence and their children to shelters, awareness-raising campaigns, the provision of information to hotline callers in such languages as Tamazight, widely spoken in Ceuta and Melilla, and the production of a study on female genital mutilation in Spain.

8. Organic Act No. 1/2015 had amended the Criminal Code in such a way as to facilitate efforts to combat gender-based violence. Efforts to combat trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation had been bolstered by the appointment of a national rapporteur on trafficking in human beings, increases in the subsidies for programmes providing assistance to female trafficking victims, the entry into force of an act providing for assistance to trafficking victims, bills on reforming the child protection system, the development of a relevant plan and the recent implementation of phase two of the National Plan on Law Enforcement Efforts to Combat Trafficking.

Articles 1 to 6

9. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** said that she would appreciate additional information on what agencies had participated in the production of the State party's report and how the drafting of the report was coordinated. She was especially interested in knowing whether NGOs had taken part. She also requested an additional explanation of the reason for the State party's continued unwillingness to withdraw its declaration to the effect that the provisions of the Convention did not apply to the rules of succession to the Spanish Crown.

10. **Ms. Pimentel** said that she wished to know how the State party viewed its lack of a comprehensive legal instrument to combat violence against women committed by persons other than partners or former partners. She wondered whether the State party was fully aware of the consequences of the changes to the Institute of Women's remit. She requested information on the strategies deployed by the authorities to ensure that laws and policies on equality were implemented in a harmonized fashion throughout the country. Lastly, she asked to what extent reports of a downward trend in the numbers of women who exercised their right to have recourse to the justice system could be attributed to a failure to train judicial officials appropriately or to the system's inaccessibility to women from more vulnerable or isolated population groups.

11. **Mr. Bruun** said that the Committee was disappointed to find that the State party's report had not more fully addressed the effects on women of the economic crisis that had begun in 2008. Research had shown that since mid-2011, women had faced large increases in unemployment, services had been cut and recovery programmes had focused on sectors dominated by men. In that context, he wondered how the Spanish authorities could explain their blindness to the differing effects of the crisis on men and women and why they did not put pressure on the European Union to take a gender-mainstreaming approach to measures designed to address the global financial and economic crisis. Were the authorities finally ready to evaluate the impact of the crisis on women?

12. The State party's unwillingness to provide compensation to Ms. Ángela Gonzáles Carreño, author of communication No. 47/2012, despite the Committee's finding that it should do so, had surprised the Committee. He urged the Spanish authorities to reconsider their position and said that he would appreciate an additional explanation of the reasons for their stance. He commended Spain on Act No. 12/2009, on the right to asylum and subsidiary protection, but wished to how the authorities ensured that its admirable provisions were actually implemented. Information about how the Government ensured that the Convention applied to domestic non-State actors operating extraterritorially would also be welcome.

13. **Ms. Schulz** said that it appeared that the situation of the Spanish machinery for the advancement of women had changed greatly since the submission of the State party's combined seventh and eighth periodic reports. Budgets appeared to have been cut so drastically that she wondered whether there were any activities left to coordinate. As the end date for nearly every gender equality strategy referred to in the reports was 2016, she asked what was planned for the future, whether relevant discussions were under way and whether there were any indicators of the resources to be made available for future strategies and plans.

14. She wished to know the reasons for the institutional changes that had led to the Institute of Women's assumption of the responsibilities for the equality policies previously overseen by the dissolved Directorate General for Equal Opportunities. She wondered whether the independence of the Institute of Women did not weaken the country's gender equality mechanism by placing it at one remove from the Government and whether the impact of the institutional changes had been assessed. It would be interesting to know whether the authorities were considering reversing those changes, how they ensured that gender issues were not addressed in isolation and how often the institute had participated in proceedings before the courts. Information on whether women had recourse to the Ombudsman's Office to defend their right to equality would likewise be welcome.

15. She requested additional information on the coordination of gender equality measures at national and regional level, the extent and impact of budget cuts, in particular in the Autonomous Communities, and the impact of Act No. 27/2013, which reallocated responsibility for gender equality policies away from local authorities. Lastly, she requested comment on reports of dissatisfaction with the Council on Women's Participation and updated information on the delivery of overseas aid.

16. **Ms. Hofmeister** said that, pursuant to the Convention and general recommendation No. 25, States parties were required to implement temporary special measures in order to accelerate de facto equality between men and women, such as through the introduction of statutory quotas in both private and public sectors where women were underrepresented. The report submitted by Spain did not provide sufficient information on whether such legally binding quotas were enforced in the country, on any other examples of temporary special measures and good practice being implemented, and on assessments that had been carried out regarding the achievement of de facto equality of men and women through temporary special measures in Spain.

17. **Ms. Salomón** (Spain) said that responsibility for drafting the State party report lay with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, and more specifically, with the Ministry's human rights office. Contributions were received from all competent ministries over the course of a year, during which autonomous communities and relevant civil society organizations were also consulted. The contributions were compiled by the human rights office which was responsible for drafting the final report, after having taken into consideration the comments provided by civil society organizations on the initial draft reports.

18. **Ms. Urbón Izquierdo** (Spain) said that the economic crisis had indeed worsened the labour market for women in terms of job security and breaking through the glass ceiling. However, the 2013–2016 Strategic Plan on Equal Opportunities sought to include women more significantly in the labour market, and to help them reconcile their home and work life and eradicate gender-based violence. Work was also being carried out with the Ministry of Employment and Social Security to draft another plan focusing on ensuring equal opportunities in employment and on combating the wage gap. Compared to the previous year, unemployment among women had slightly fallen. Moreover, the Institute of Women made an important contribution to ensuring that cross-cutting gender issues were addressed, helping women to develop necessary skills, and mainstreaming the notion of equal opportunities.

19. With regard to quotas, the Code of Good Governance for Listed Companies was intended to ensure that women accounted for 30 per cent of the boards of directors of listed companies by 2020. Agreements had also been signed with more than 150 large companies to increase the participation of women in their governing boards. Training programmes for female directors were available, as were projects conducted in cooperation with employers to train promising women through a mentoring system, all of which had produced positive results. The Government had also worked with employers in the agricultural sector to increase the participation of women in that field.

20. **Ms. Ortega Sanz** (Spain) said that the implementation of Spain's Strategic Plan on Equal Opportunities would be followed up and monitored. A system of indicators would be approved by all relevant ministry departments and a working process had already been established which involved collecting data on steps taken to comply with the strategic plan and monitoring the contribution to the promotion of gender equality made by all stakeholders. Two reports would be produced in that regard, the first in 2015 and the second at the end of the period of implementation of the strategic plan. Preliminary data already seemed to suggest that implementation was on track.

21. **Mr. García Jiménez** (Spain) said that the Government was in permanent dialogue with the Autonomous Communities through, for example, the annual sector conference on equality, virtual meetings, and the State Gender Observatory which produced an annual report on gender issues across all federal and autonomous government departments. Organic Act No. 1/2004 on integral protection measures against gender violence (LOVG) addressed the issue of standard-setting in respect of gender-based violence, and any reform of that law should focus on achieving a standardized approach to combating gender-based violence. The National Strategy for the Eradication of Violence against Women (2013–2016) had been established to further promote the protection of women. Furthermore, the Autonomous Communities had a number of legal instruments available to them to tackle a variety of issues, including domestic violence, female genital mutilation, sexual assault and forced marriage.

22. Turning to the impact of the economic crisis on women, he said that 70 per cent of the State's budget on gender-based violence during the crisis had been spent on victim support services, such as the establishment of hotlines and shelters. Despite a reduction in the overall budget, there had been no cuts in support or protection for victims of gender-based violence. Campaigns had been launched by civil society organizations and public and private enterprises to ensure that such services remained available to victims, and awareness-raising activities continued to be funded through extrabudgetary resources.

23. The Autonomous Communities were legally required to contribute to the implementation of Organic Act No. 1/2004, and they were also involved in producing a report reviewing the harmonization of the Act at the autonomous community level.

Measures would be adopted to harmonize autonomous community legislation with State legislation and there were several examples of coordination mechanisms in place, such as the establishment by the Government of a national network of shelter houses and virtual coordination groups to encourage cooperation between autonomous communities. Harmonization of local legislation was another important aspect and the State provided medium- to long-term funding for local communities in their endeavours to combat gender-based violence.

24. **Ms. Ruiz Bautista** (Spain) said that a national plan of action for social inclusion was currently being implemented and evaluated. It focused on ensuring equal opportunities in the workplace, reducing the wage gap between men and women, and guaranteeing equal access to services. It also encompassed a series of measures for the most vulnerable groups of women, including Roma and women with disabilities. Moreover, the national plan of action addressed the issue of child poverty and had a specific budget dedicated to providing assistance to the most vulnerable families. In the wake of the economic crisis, the budget for combating child and female poverty had increased. Finally, recent data indicated that social exclusion and poverty among women had decreased, marking a reverse in the trend of previous years.

25. **Mr. Viada** (Spain) said that discrimination would not be an issue under new inheritance laws because the Constitution stipulated that there must be no discrimination on the basis of sex in new legislation. However, in respect of succession to the Crown, article 56 of the Constitution did provide for the preference of men over women, but it was the right of the State to maintain any reservations pertaining to its own Constitution, tradition and history. Such a decision did not contravene any international instrument.

26. **Ms. Martín Nájera** (Spain), referring to the reduction in the number of complaints lodged in respect of gender-based violence, said that the figure had decreased between 2009 and 2013 but had increased once again in 2014. While the fluctuation in itself was not important, the cause for concern was that the number of complaints had remained fairly stable, whereas the Government had expected an increase in awareness of the need to report gender-based violence and a reduction in reported cases as a result of a decrease in the perpetration of such crimes. The Office of the Attorney General had a specialized remit for gender-based violence pursuant to Organic Act No. 1/2004. Every year, public prosecutors convened to discuss the most topical issues and then delivered feedback from that meeting to their local directorates while supervising and monitoring the work of the latter in the field of gender-based violence. There had been a significant increase in the number of courts specialized in gender-based violence and the number of lawyers competent in the same field. Moreover, judges presiding over such courts were required to undergo specialized training.

27. **Mr. Zurita Bayona** (Spain) said that national legislation provided for the strengthening of inter-institutional coordination in the prevention of violence against women. An important step forward in that respect had been the introduction, in 2007, of the System for Comprehensive Monitoring of Cases of Gender-based Violence, which was a pioneering initiative aimed at establishing an extensive network of police officers, judges, prosecutors, prison staff and other professionals responsible for the protection and security of victims of gender-based violence.

28. As at 31 May 2015, more than 370,000 cases had been recorded in the system, of which 51,000 were considered active, and more than 2 million assessments had been carried out to determine the risk of victims being subjected to violence again. The Government encouraged the Committee and civil society organizations to familiarize themselves with the system and to make recommendations for improvements.

29. **Mr. González Pacheco** (Spain) said that, pursuant to the 2009 Asylum Act, applicants were invited to attend an interview and had the right of appeal. The fact that asylum had, on several occasions, been granted on the basis of gender-based persecution was proof that the Act was implemented in practice.

30. **Mr. Rodríguez-Salmones** (Spain) said that, in terms of employment, the global financial crisis had affected Spanish men more than women. Of the 3.2 million jobs lost between 2007 and 2015, 80 per cent had been held by men. That figure was unsurprising given that many losses had been suffered in the construction industry and in low-skilled sectors of the economy, where men outnumbered women. As a result of job cuts, the percentage of women in the workforce had risen from 42 per cent in 2008 to 47 per cent in 2015.

31. **Ms. de la Concha Renero** (Spain) said that, to mitigate the effects of the financial crisis, the Government had offered incentives such as rebates and reductions in social security contributions, including through Royal Decree-Law No. 1/2015. One of the key aims of the financial incentives, which were available to employers and self-employed workers, was to encourage the long-term hiring of women, particularly in sectors in which they were underrepresented. Rebates were more generous if the women recruited had disabilities or were victims of domestic or gender-based violence and, for the latter group, the period of entitlement to financial incentives was extended from three years to four.

32. Self-employed women were eligible for rebates up to the age of 35, while for men, the limit was set at 30. Moreover, self-employed women who were victims of domestic or gender-based violence were exempt from social security taxes for a period of up to six months. The financial incentives also applied to domestic work, including temporary contracts in cases where the substituted employee was a victim of gender-based violence, on leave to care for relatives, on maternity leave or breastfeeding. To date, more than 24,000 women had received rebates and around 174,000 had benefited from reductions.

33. Women victims of gender-based violence were entitled to social security coverage throughout any periods of recovery and those who were divorced or separated were eligible for a widow's pension regardless of whether they were already receiving alimony payments. Persons convicted of the first-degree murder of their partner for reasons of gender were stripped of their right to a widow's pension and, where appropriate, the money was instead given to the victim's children.

34. **Mr. Bruun** asked how many asylum requests had been granted on the basis of gender-based persecution and noted that his question on the case of *González Carreño v. Spain* had not been answered. He invited the delegation to explain what was done to educate and inform people about the Convention and its Optional Protocol in the State party.

35. **Ms. Schulz** said that she had not received replies to her questions on the role of the Council on Women's Participation and on the steps taken by the Ombudsman's Office to promote gender equality. According to alternative sources, most of the international development cooperation plans and programmes outlined in paragraphs 25 to 31 of the State party report (CEDAW/C/ESP/7-8) had been scrapped. The delegation should provide updated information in that regard and indicate whether, in the implementation of the Marca España project, care was taken to avoid supporting Spanish companies that were engaged abroad in activities that might have discriminatory effects on women.

36. **Ms. Pimentel** said that, according to information made available to the Committee, under Organic Act No. 8/2013 of 9 December 2013 on improving education quality, pupils who opted for Catholic religious education were not able to

follow courses on "social and ethical values", which taught many of the principles that underpinned Organic Act No. 3/2007 of 22 March 2007 on effective equality for women and men. The Committee had also been informed of cutbacks in the sex education component of some school curricula, despite the provisions of article 9 of Organic Act No. 2/2010 of 3 March 2010 on sexual and reproductive health and voluntary termination of pregnancy. She invited the delegation to comment on the reports, which appeared to indicate a retrograde step.

37. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** recalled that the Committee did not question the right of States parties to enter reservations to the Convention. It would be useful, however, for the delegation to elaborate on the State party's reply to paragraph 2 of the list of issues (CEDAW/C/ESP/Q/7-8), on the possibility of withdrawing the declaration concerning succession to the Spanish Crown, particularly in the light of paragraph 11 of the Committee's previous concluding observations on Spain (CEDAW/C/ESP/CO/6). She would also appreciate an explanation of how the Government ensured equal respect for women's rights across all autonomous communities.

38. **Ms. Ruiz Bautista** (Spain) said that the Council on Women's Participation was an advisory body comprising 40 representatives from the civil service, women's organizations, employers' associations, trade unions and experts in the field of equal opportunities. Its tasks included the submission of reports and recommendations on gender equality bills, royal decrees and other relevant legal texts.

39. Information on the number and nature of complaints filed with the Ombudsman's Office would be provided in writing within 48 hours. The central Government held regular consultations with representatives of government institutions in each Autonomous Community to enhance coordination and ensure that the gender perspective was incorporated in public policies and programmes.

40. **Mr. González Pacheco** (Spain) said that, between 2010 and 2014, 48 asylum requests had been granted on the basis of gender-based persecution.

41. **Mr. Viada** (Spain) said that the *González Carreño* case was still pending. The author of the communication submitted to the Committee had brought an action for damages against the State that was being processed through administrative channels. Regarding the payment of compensation, in a preliminary report published in June 2015, the Council of State had recalled Spanish case law to the effect that the Committee's findings were recommendations and could not be considered legally binding.

42. **Ms. Ramos García** (Spain) said that religious education in Spain was not limited to Catholicism and covered, among others, Islam and Judaism. Pursuant to Organic Act No. 8/2013, pupils who did not wish to attend religious education classes were required to study social and ethical values instead. That did not mean, however, that pupils could not study both. Sex education was included in a number of subjects and elements of it were addressed specifically in biology and psychology lessons. Moreover, special emphasis was placed in school curricula on the elimination of gender stereotypes and of any form of violence against women.

43. **Mr. Bruun**, supported by **Ms. Pimentel**, said that, in the *González Carreño* case, although the Committee's findings were not legally binding, implementing them and granting compensation would demonstrate respect for the competence of human rights treaty bodies and a strong political will to defend victims of domestic violence.

44. **Ms. Salomón** (Spain) said that a reduction of around 70 per cent in the budget for international development cooperation had inevitably affected the implementation

of gender equality plans and programmes. Gender equality was, however, still treated as a priority in the 2013–2016 Fourth Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation.

45. **Ms. Al-Dosari** asked what was done to facilitate the social integration of immigrant women; what measures had been adopted to eradicate or change gender stereotypes, including at the local authority level; and what policies were in place to protect women members of ethnic or other minorities, particularly in the media. She invited the delegation to provide additional information on maternity leave and to indicate whether any mechanisms had been established to eliminate stereotypes in women's education. The delegation should also describe what was done to foster women's participation in sport and outline the steps taken by the Autonomous Communities to combat gender-based violence, including through the introduction of specific courses in secondary schools. It would be useful to know how the efforts of the Autonomous Communities in that regard were evaluated.

46. **Ms. Acar** said that she was under the impression that the Government of Spain did not have the political will to tackle the problem of gender-based violence. It could choose to deem the observations of the Committee non-binding, or it could take a progressive approach to complying with its obligations under international law. The State party's report made no mention of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, although Spain had been one of the first countries to ratify the Convention, a fundamental instrument representing an outgrowth of the Committee's general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women.

47. She wished to know, in particular, what was the operational definition of gender-based violence under Spanish law, and to what extent it reflected the kinds of gender-based violence listed in the Istanbul Convention, including stalking, psychological violence and forced marriage, inter alia. Had governmental budget cuts affected shelters and services in the Autonomous Communities?

48. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** said that although the report contained abundant information on the problem of prostitution and trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation, it was more descriptive than analytical. Efforts should be made to analyse and evaluate the scope of the problem, and the impact of programmes and plans. Paragraph 84 of the report recognized that the extent of the crime of trafficking in Spain was not known. The replies to the list of issues discussed the number of complaints of gender-based violence, and mentioned measures to improve the protection of women victims and review the risk assessment used by the police. Had those measures been instituted nationwide?

49. Concerns had been raised about the number of girls and women that had been victims of trafficking, many of whom were foreigners; information on services offering support and treatment would be welcome. In addition, it would be useful to know whether gender-training and awareness-raising was offered to persons providing services to victims. It seemed that since the start of the recent crisis in Spain, many more Spanish women had also been turning to prostitution; information on that development would be welcome.

50. **Ms. Urbón Izquierdo** (Spain) said that the Observatory of Women's Image was responsible for ensuring that images shown in the media respected the principle of gender equality. The Observatory had received thousands of complaints; in 216 cases, the Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities had asked companies to withdraw advertising campaigns regarded as sexist. Two companies were being sued for advertising campaigns that violated the principle of equal opportunities. The Institute also organized 15 travelling exhibits, aimed at combating gender stereotypes. A number of other campaigns were being carried out, in such areas as sharing

responsibilities in the home, promoting gender equality in education, and combating gender stereotypes in the workplace. A programme at the University of Santiago de Compostela sought to integrate the gender perspective into all areas of study.

51. **Mr. García Jiménez** (Spain) said that the National Strategy for the Eradication of Violence against Women (2013–2016) comprised 284 measures. The Council of Ministers had declared gender violence a national priority in 2014, within the framework of laws that had already been adopted. Royal Decree-Law No. 3/2013, for example, provided free legal assistance to all victims of gender violence. Numerous bills currently under consideration would establish provisions for the protection of children, give greater power to the court in handling cases of violence against women, and strengthen training for psychosocial teams, inter alia. Spain had ratified the Istanbul Convention without reservations.

52. Detailed information was available on services provided by the Autonomous Communities in rural areas. The website of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality displayed over 300 services providing housing assistance, along with many social, psychological and other services; there was even an interactive page showing which services were available in each community.

53. With regard to the trafficking of girls and women for purposes of sexual exploitation, staff across almost all sectors of the public administration received specialized training in accordance with their areas of competence. For example, in 2012, almost 90 per cent of all personnel in sections of the national police force dealing with illegal immigration networks and document forgery had received training in the area of trafficking.

54. In the Autonomous Communities, the numerous social organizations and non-profit bodies providing services for women victims of violence had received government subsidies 33 per cent higher in 2015 than in the previous year. There were 40 shelters in 14 communities and 120 ambulatory clinics. As for impact, in 2014, women in danger had sought assistance more than 7,700 times, and more than 3,300 consultations had been provided.

55. **Ms. Ruiz Bautista** (Spain) said that she was responsible for implementing the policy aimed at promoting the inclusion and social integration of the Roma population; in 2012 a national framework had been established for that purpose. Assistance was provided in four main areas, namely employment, housing, health and education, taking into account cross-cutting considerations such as gender, non-discrimination and equal treatment. The Advisory Council for the Roma People monitored the actions of the Government and made proposals. Recently, it had proposed strengthening measures to combat discrimination against Roma, in particular Roma women, with emphasis on prejudice, stereotypes, and negative images. The Roma population of Spain was the second largest in Europe, and a significant portion of that population was fully integrated into Spanish society. There remained, however, a core group that was associated with poverty and exclusion. The Government provided funding for programmes designed to improve the image of Roma; as an example, the Andalusian Federation of Roma Women, a group made up of university-educated Roma women, was working to improve the portrayal of Roma women in the media. Other examples were a Roma group that published yearly reports analysing instances of discrimination against the Roma population, and a group called Journalists against Racism which also sought to combat negative images and stereotypes.

56. **Mr. López Soto** (Spain) said that the Higher Council for Sports was the body competent in the area of sports, and its women and sports policy had recently led to the establishment of a Subdirectorate for Women and Sports, which had the role of

promoting equal opportunities for women in the field of sports and removing obstacles to equal treatment. Sports organizations were private, but nonetheless closely linked to the public administrations. Their statutes had recently been revised, calling for at least three women to sit on every board, or at least 33 per cent participation by women. The Universe of Women (Universo Mujeres) programme advocated the social promotion of women through participation in sports. Currently, 49 per cent of participants in competitive sports events in schools were girls; the corresponding figure at university level was 44 per cent.

57. **Ms. Ramos García** (Spain) said that the new Education Act gave each Autonomous Community the capacity to establish its own school curricula in accordance with needs and circumstances; some had incorporated courses related to the matter of gender equality.

58. **Mr. Sánchez-CovisaVilla** (Spain) said that he shared the concerns expressed by Ms. Arocha Domínguez regarding prostitution. He was responsible for coordinating the work of 50 prosecutors throughout Spain specifically assigned to the problem of human trafficking, who were assisted by 63 additional prosecutors spread through the various territories. The Office of the Prosecutor for Immigrant Affairs had modelled its approach on the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol), and later had drawn on other international laws, including Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims. In the area of prevention, the Government had been striving to do precisely what Ms. Arocha Domínguez had suggested, which was to carry out a criminological analysis, identifying the nationality of traffickers and victims, and studying the violent, abusive and deceptive means and methods used to capture victims in their countries of origin, transport them from country to country, and exploit them on arrival in Spain. Each year, the Office of the Attorney General published a detailed account of such cases on its website.

59. Prosecutors assigned to human trafficking required specific qualifications and awareness of the issues. Most Spaniards were unaware of the existence of human trafficking, and had no conception of the gravity of the crime, which consisted in enslavement and sexual exploitation. Internal coordination was necessary; a complaint or report to any member of the police or Guardia Civil, or to any public prosecutor, was transmitted immediately to the Office of the Attorney General, which monitored and followed each and every case. The Office of the Attorney General had for many years held regular monthly meetings with the Spanish Anti-Trafficking Network, a consortium of more than two dozen non-governmental organizations dedicated to the fight against trafficking. Prosecutors could contact the Attorney General at any hour of the day or night with regard to cases calling for urgent action. For accounts of particular cases, he referred the Committee to reports published online.

60. **Ms. Martín Nájera** (Spain) said that although the Government might not have made mention, in its report and replies, to all the international instruments pertaining to gender-based violence, it had given answers and clarifications to all questions raised. In article 1 of Organic Act No. 1/2004, gender-based violence was defined as a manifestation of discrimination, and of the power of men over women in intimate relationships. On the basis of the Istanbul Convention, other forms of violence, such as stalking, psychological violence and forced marriage, had been incorporated into the law as aggravating circumstances.

61. **Mr. Rodríguez-Salmones** said that there were two facets to the policy regarding foreigners arriving in Spain who did not speak the national languages, namely language instruction and translation services. Lessons in language and culture were

offered, for example, in refugee camps and shelters. The General Secretariat for Immigration and Emigration provided language programmes to immigrants, as did such civil society organizations as the Red Cross and Caritas. Interpretation and translation services were often available in hospitals and courthouses.

62. **Ms. Acar** said that she was not sure that an aggravating circumstance amounted to the same thing as a crime in its own right. She was reassured to learn that Spain had ratified the Istanbul Convention, and expected that it would eventually incorporate those other forms of violence against women into its legislation.

63. She wished to know whether training in domestic violence was obligatory for all judges, including divorce and custody judges, and whether it made specific reference to the Convention and the Optional Protocol.

64. **Ms. Al-Dosari** said that she wondered if there was a strategic plan for combating stereotypes and eradicating harmful practices.

65. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** asked whether interpretation services were also available at border posts and police stations. She enquired what measures were taken to discourage prostitution, and whether it was the prostitutes themselves or their pimps who were subject to prosecution.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.